

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5313

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO MEDICAL CANNABIS STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/9/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/2/2021

File No.: 101

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law

REASONS FOR THE BILL:

Make various changes to the medical marijuana laws including giving patients and primary caregivers the ability to purchase marijuana at dispensaries other than their pre-selected location. Require dispensaries to integrate records thru the electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring Program transmitting dispensing information immediately or within one hour to prevent improper or illegal drug use or prescribing. To eliminate the fees for renewing patient or caregiver registration and administrative costs for renewing registrations.

JFS LANGUAGE:

Removes administrative and renewal fees for registration but leaves the initial registration fee and amends existing statute.

Changes effective dates to January 1, 2022 for section 2.

Requires dispensaries to integrate their records by January 2, 2022. Requires dispensaries to update transactions not less than an hour after and adds enforcement provisions for dispensaries that don't comply.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jason P. Prevelige, Chair Legislative Affairs, Connecticut Academy of Physician Assistants supports the bill. We appreciate the bill but respectfully ask that (P.A.) physicians assistants be included in the ability to certify eligibility for the medical cannabis program. P.A.'s are able to certify medical marijuana in New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts New Hampshire and Vermont. Please help improve the access to care that our patients deserve.

DeVauhn Ward, Marijuana Policy Project supports the bill. In its seventh year it is time to revise the statues. Section 2 allows two primary caregivers for each patient but we would like to see institutional caregivers as well. Section 3 eliminates the fees and with the pandemic this can mean the difference between paying bills and medicine. We do not take a position on section 5 of the bill.

Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council testified in favor of the bill. There has been an increase of 24% in the last year and we wish to retain the reputation as the best medical marijuana program in the nation. This bill makes enhancements to the program by allowing patients to have more flexibility and reduce costs. We do have some concerns with section 5 because it is unclear and may result in unintended consequences.

Academy of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries provided testimony on the bill. The bill makes needed revisions to the medical marijuana statues. Elimination of the application and annual administration fee puts this in line with other medical treatment or therapies that requires no fees. Section 5 does not make clear what the goal is and may be redundant of existing regulations.

Fine Fettle Dispensary supports the bill. The update further enhance the program. As a locally owned and operated dispensary organization minority managers in all three of our dispensaries we reach our patients in their native languages. The one dispensary rule inhibits our patients and is no longer necessary. May we suggest that we add a small tax for out of state patients to offset the revenue loss from the reduced fees.

Brian Essenter, Medical Marijuana Counselor/Pharmacist supports the bill. Section 1 would only pertain to dispensaries that have more than one location. Why not allow patients to transfer and require all dispensaries to up load at real time. This could cause logical issues. Section 5 does not give a definition and is vague.

Steve Jones submitted testimony in support of the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 15, 2021